



Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Implementation Research and Evaluation
Planning Grants

HHS-2016-ACF-OPRE-YE-1177

Application Due Date: 07/08/2016

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**Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families**

Program Office: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Funding Opportunity Title: Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)
Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants
Announcement Type: Initial
Funding Opportunity Number: HHS-2016-ACF-OPRE-YE-1177
Primary CFDA Number: 93.575
Due Date For Letter of Intent: 05/23/2016
Due Date for Applications: 07/08/2016

Executive Summary

Notices:

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire funding opportunity announcement (FOA) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. For more information on applying for grants, please visit "How to Apply for a Grant" on the ACF Grants Page at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto>.**

This FOA will fund planning grants (Phase I) for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies to develop a research-based evaluation of the implementation of policies and initiatives to support quality improvements in early care and education programs in response to the goals of the CCDBG Act of 2014. These 18-month grants, with one project and budget period, will fund a planning phase that will lead to testing of the evaluations in Phase II, under a separate future FOA.

During the period of this grant, CCDF Lead Agencies will identify the policies and/or initiatives they would like to evaluate and develop a research and evaluation plan with researchers either within their organization or with an outside partner. Formalized partnerships are not necessary at the time of application. These planning grants may be followed by a second competition (Phase II), under a separate FOA, to support execution of the research and evaluation plans. At the end of the planning grant, grantees are expected to articulate how the evaluation will be implemented in Phase II by documenting and measuring implementation of policies, including funding of implementation; tracking child, family, and provider level variables; developing and sustaining research partnerships; and executing their research plan. Grantees from this FOA will be eligible to compete for funding to implement the research and evaluation activities as part of Phase II.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grant program is funded under the authority of Section 658O(a)(5) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, as amended by Pub. L. No. 113-186, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 9858m(a)(5).

Description

A. Background

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a multibillion-dollar federal and state partnership administered by the Office of Child Care (OCC, formerly the Child Care Bureau [CCB]) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to support low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high-quality, early care, and afterschool programs. The CCDBG Act of 2014 (Pub.L. 113-186) was signed into law November 19, 2014 and reauthorizes the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program for the first time since 1996. The CCDBG Act of 2014 renews authority for CCDF through FY2020 and represents a historic re-envisioning of the program with increased focus on balancing dual purposes: promoting economic self-sufficiency for low-income families, while supporting healthy development and school readiness for children. The new law also includes specific provisions to: 1) protect the health and safety of children in child care; 2) help parents make informed consumer choices and access information to support child development; 3) provide equal access to stable, high quality child care for low-income children; and 4) enhance the quality of child care and the early childhood workforce.

In 2015, the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families released a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to outline, provide more details, and amend CCDF policies. The CCDBG Act of 2014 and the NPRM provide guidance regarding policies to carry out the provisions outlined above in more detail, but lead agencies have flexibility in terms of the implementation of these provisions. CCDF lead agencies may implement policies differently depending on their geography, population served or other criteria. See <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/ccdf-reauthorization> for more information regarding reauthorization. CCDF Lead agencies are expected to implement the new policies soon, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi-2015-09> for a list of implementation dates.

From 2000 until 2015, Congress appropriated approximately \$10 million annually from CCDF discretionary funds for research, demonstration, and evaluation. With the enactment of the CCDBG Act of 2014, Congress authorized a permanent reservation of approximately \$14 million of CCDF funds for research and evaluation. Research funded through CCDF is intended to help child care decision makers in crafting policies and initiatives that support positive outcomes for families and children; to increase the capacity for child care research at the national, state, and local levels; and to promote linkages among research, policy, and practice. To date, these funds have supported research efforts that have increased our knowledge about the efficacy of child care subsidy policies and programs in enhancing employment and economic self-sufficiency of low-income families, and in improving quality

in all child care and early education settings to support learning and development of children. Descriptions of current and past research projects can be found at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/topic/overview/child-care>.

B. Grant Program Goals and Expectations

The purpose of the CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants is to provide CCDF Lead Agencies the opportunity to plan for a rigorous, policy-relevant evaluation of the implementation of policies and initiatives in response to the goals of the CCDBG Act of 2014. All states, territories, and tribes will need to comply with new policies as part of the law, but how they implement the policies is up to some discretion. This grant program will provide lead agencies the opportunity to evaluate the implementation of a set of policies of their choosing. For example, lead agencies may want to evaluate the effectiveness of certain investments in quality improvement (i.e., providing targeted professional development) that are funded with the increase in quality set aside as part of the new law. This grant program is a unique opportunity for CCDF Lead Agencies to build capacity in research and evaluation and learn to use data they are already collecting to evaluate their policy choices. It will also help CCDF Lead Agencies to identify new data that can facilitate tracking of changes and outcomes at the level of the ECE programs, families and children resulting from the changes in policies and implementation of new initiatives.

In Phase I (the current FOA), CCDF Lead Agencies will develop a research plan to evaluate implementation of key policies and initiatives of their choosing in response to the goals of the law. Grantees will have the opportunity to work with a cohort of other funded grantees, participate in peer learning, and develop and plan for a rigorous evaluation. Grantees are also expected to participate in a process evaluation if one should take place. States, territories, and tribes are likely in different points in their readiness to develop a research and evaluation plan under this grant. This grant program is intended for those at all levels of readiness, those with extensive experience with research and evaluation, and those who have less experience. It is not the intention for each of the evaluation plans to be exactly the same across states, territories, and tribes, including the level of complexity and rigor. Some states may develop more complex research plans, including using the planning grant to do preliminary analyses and conducting pilot studies, while others may develop simpler designs and spend the planning grant learning about research and evaluation and solidifying new research partnerships. Grantees will also have the opportunity to apply for funding as part of Phase II to implement their research plans. The specific goals and expectations of this new grant program are:

1. To address issues of current relevance to CCDF decision makers at the local, state and national levels.

Research and evaluation are critical to understanding child care policy issues. The passage of the CCDBG Act of 2014 provides a unique opportunity for CCDF Lead Agencies to test the implementation of policies and initiatives in response to the goals of the law and evaluate these changes through rigorous research methods. CCDF Lead Agencies may choose to test different strategies of compliance with policies and use findings to implement effective practices more widely, they may choose to implement policies in different localities and evaluate the effectiveness of those policies across regions, or they may choose to evaluate the implementation of policies in other ways. Projects funded through this grant program must be

led by State, Territory, or Tribal CCDF Lead Agencies, and it is expected that Lead Agency staff will be actively engaged in the projects (For State and Territory CCDF Grantees' contact information, please visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts>; for CCDF Tribal Grantees' contact information, please visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-tribal-grantees-listed-in-alphabetical-order>). Research questions and methodology must be developed by child care decision makers in partnership with researchers, who may be on staff with the agency or working at an outside organization, such as an institution of higher education or a research organization. If partnerships with outside organizations are planned, it is expected that partnerships are formalized through memorandums of understanding or subcontract agreements during the course of the grant, but formalized partnerships are not necessary at the time of application.

The results of the funded projects are expected to address issues that are relevant to CCDF decision makers generally, in addition to issues that are specific to a single state.

Collaborative projects that would explore common questions across states are permitted and encouraged. States, territories, and tribes are trying to make decisions about implementing the rules of the new law and answer similar question; this grant program will assist CCDF Lead Agencies in thinking about these questions and designing studies to answer them. Examples of broad topical areas identified by the Office of Child Care are listed below, with some example research questions that CCDF Lead Agencies might want to answer to assess the results of their implementation efforts. Other topics and research questions in response to implementation of the law are also encouraged.

Supporting Family Child Care Providers

- How can family child care providers be included in career pathways?
- How can new training and professional development initiatives support unregulated providers to help them meet the new requirements stated in the law?
- How can the supply of high quality family child care be increased to reach underserved populations, including through the use of staffed family child care networks?
- What are effective strategies to engage family child care providers in quality improvement initiatives?

Increasing Access to High Quality Care

- How many children in the subsidy program are in high quality care?
- Which is the best methodology for setting provider payment rates that takes into account the cost of providing high quality care?
- What is the relationship between payment rates and access to high quality care for underserved populations (e.g., infants/toddlers, school age children, children with disabilities, and those living in rural communities)?
- What is the relationship between payment rates and/or additional supports such as mental health consultants and access to high quality care for at-risk populations (e.g., teen parents, children exposed to violence, substance abuse, abuse or neglect, other forms of trauma, and participation with child protective services)?
- How do the number/percentage of high quality providers increase when rates are increased – what is the tipping point? What level of rates would drive more high quality providers to take subsidy children and families?

- How does an increase in investment in quality improvement (from an increase in quality set aside or infant/toddler set aside) increase access to high-quality care?
- How does consumer education influence family choice of high quality care? Which approaches to consumer education result in higher rates of information use to inform choice?

Effective Business Practices/Subsidy Administration

- What is the best way to use grants and contracts to increase supply of quality center-based and family child care?
- How do the changes to eligibility processes impact coordination with other benefits for low-income families (e.g., SNAP) and early childhood programs (e.g., Head Start)?
- What are the effects of changes in redetermination policies on continuity of care arrangements, access to quality, and parental employment outcomes?
- What are most effective approaches to training and deployment of monitoring staff to ensure implementation of new health and safety requirements, including in license exempt settings?

2. To increase the capacity of CCDF Lead Agencies in states, territories, and tribes to plan and conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research

CCDF Lead Agencies will need to implement changes to CCDF administration and policies in the next few years to comply with changes to the CCDBG Law of 2014. However, some decisions about implementation may benefit from examining different strategies. For example, lead agencies might employ a rapid cycle evaluation to test different policies to investigate whether certain strategies work better for different populations or in different localities. However, CCDF lead agencies may not have experience with planning and evaluating policies using rigorous research methodology. This grant program would increase the capacity of CCDF Lead Agencies to plan for and eventually conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research.

Grantees will work as a cohort and work with a CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Center if one should be created. While not a requirement of the application (Phase I), it is expected that grantees will have a functional data system at the time of implementation (Phase II), to track child, family, and provider level information, and be able to pull data from this system to conduct the research and evaluation plan. The definition of a data system will vary across states, territories, and tribes. For the purposes of this grant program, a data system could include information on licensing, the subsidy system, professional development, QRIS, or other data collected as part of monitoring or reporting requirements. Some states, territories and tribes may collect other data.

Access to a functioning data system is often a barrier for state agencies to use their administrative data for research and evaluation. Therefore, grantees may need to upgrade or modify their data systems during the period of the grant to ensure that at the time of Phase II, it will be ready for use. That is, at the time of Phase II, grantees will be expected to pull data from their system and/or link to other data, if applicable within other systems or newly collected data. Although grant funds cannot be used to support work upgrading the system, grantees can work together to identify critical functionalities of a data system that would support data-driven decision-making, program evaluation, and policy-relevant research.

To improve the capacity of the individual projects, as well as the capacity of the field over time, grantees will be expected to participate in a network of CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning grantees. Network members will be expected to meet annually and communicate regularly with federal staff and other grantees to share lessons learned, identify opportunities for collaboration, and to develop collective expertise and resources to be shared with the field at large. Grantees will also be expected to work with a CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Center if one should be created and participate in a process evaluation if one should take place. In developing research plans during Phase I, grantees will consider innovative methods to understand the implementation of key provisions of the new law. For example, quasi-experimental designs, such as rapid cycle evaluation, regression discontinuity, and interrupted time-series, may be possible with administrative data collected as part of their existing data system. Grantees may also consider whether additional data collection may be appropriate for their planned research projects. Grantees are expected to participate in peer learning with the Network and Center to learn about these methods and plan for use in their own research designs where appropriate.

It is expected that by the end of the period of performance, grantees would be able to submit a competitive application for funding of the implementation of their research plan (Phase II). Please note: Submitting an application to Phase II does not guarantee funding. The applicant will need to demonstrate that they are ready to implement a rigorous research and/or evaluation design to answer the research questions identified.

3. To encourage collaboration among policymakers and researchers to meet the goals of this project

Grantees are expected to work with researchers either within their organization or through a partnership with an outside research organization, such as a university or research firm. While these partnerships do not have to be formalized at the time of the application, through a subcontract or memorandum of understanding, it is expected that during Phase I, these relationships will be developed and a structure will be refined. The work supported by this grant program will be collaborative from start to finish. Together, the partners are expected to develop the research questions, agree on the research design and its implementation, establish a mechanism to discuss the results as they are obtained and direct further research, consider the practice and policy implications of the results, disseminate the results to multiple audiences, and plan for future research. On the practitioner side, relevant decision-makers from across the agency are expected to take part in this process, but so too are other relevant stakeholders. The proposed research developed as part of this grant program is of equal importance as the development of the proposed partnership and collaboration. The balance of effort devoted to each may vary by the individual partnership (e.g., new partnerships may require somewhat greater efforts for developing the partnership) or the type of research done. The research should be of value to both the lead agency and to building knowledge in the social policy and early care and education fields. Jointly developing the research questions helps ensure that the research will be of direct use to the lead agency, as well as to the field at large. Decision-making processes, joint accountability, and oversight should be addressed by the research partners during Phase I, including communication protocols and feedback loops at every level.

4. To encourage active communication, networking, and interdisciplinary collaboration

among prominent child care researchers and policymakers on critical issues for child care policies, programs, and outcomes.

Grantees will be required to participate in the Annual Meeting of the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC), a group of researchers who have conducted research to answer child care policy-relevant questions, currently or previously funded by ACF, and may be invited to present at meetings of CCDF administrators.

C. Additional Project Requirements

Under the cooperative agreements, substantial involvement by ACF is anticipated throughout the duration of the funded projects.

As described in detail in the section on grant program goals and expectations, grantees will be expected to:

- Participate in a network of CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning grantees, including meeting annually and regularly communicating with federal staff and other grantees;
- Work with a CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Center, if one should be created; and
- Participate in the annual meeting of the CCEEPRC

Project Phases—Two Distinct Competitions for Funding

There will be two distinct competitions for funding: one for planning (Phase I) and one for implementation (Phase II). Awards of funding for planning (Phase I), which is described in this FOA, does not guarantee awards for funding for implementation (Phase II); however, only grantees awarded funding under the planning grants (Phase I) are eligible to apply for implementation funding (Phase II).

For this FOA, projects will need to demonstrate a capacity for success in all of the components of the Phase I and show how this planning phase will create the capacity to carry out the implementation activities during Phase II.

Funding of projects for Phase I will be based on the activities proposed to be conducted during Phase I, with acknowledgement of how these activities will provide them with the information for their application for Phase II awards. At the time of the second application (2017), Phase I projects that have used the planning time effectively will have a concrete plan with evidence to support their capacity to carry out a rigorous research-based evaluation of implementation of key policies and initiatives to achieve the goals of the CCDBG Law of 2014.

Activities in Phase II are expected to include:

- Implement the research plan to evaluate implementation selected and initiatives in response to the goals of the CCDBG Act of 2014
- Continue to build and strengthen partnerships between researchers and CCDF Lead Agencies; and
- Disseminate findings of the research and evaluation plan widely to relevant stakeholders

Pre-Application Technical Assistance

PRE-APPLICATION TELECONFERENCE

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) will conduct a pre-application teleconference on Friday, May 20, 2016 from 1:00pm – 2:00pm (EST). The call-in number is (202) 774-2300; the passcode is 993 329 560. The goal of the teleconference is to provide background information on the CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning grants, as well as provide potential applicants with information regarding application submission. Pre-application teleconference materials may be accessed on the ACF website at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/child-care-development-block-grant-ccdbg-implementation-research-and-evaluation-planning-grants>.

Joining and participating in the teleconference is voluntary. There will not be a question/answer (Q &A) portion during this call and participants will remain anonymous on the teleconference. Opting not to participate in the teleconference will not affect the application scoring or selection process. Interested applicants unable to participate in the pre-application teleconference may access a recording of the teleconference and the PowerPoint presentation on the ACF website, following the teleconference.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	\$1,125,000
Expected Number of Awards:	15
Award Ceiling:	\$75,000 Per Project Period
Award Floor:	\$50,000 Per Project Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	\$75,000 Per Project Period
Anticipated Project Start Date:	09/30/2016

Length of Project Periods:

Length of Project Period:	18-month project and budget period
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Additional Information on Awards:

Awards made under this announcement are subject to the availability of federal funds.

Applications requesting an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period, or per project period, as stated in this section, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if

the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** See *Section III.2.* of this announcement for information on cost-sharing or matching requirements.

Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement

Under the cooperative agreements, substantial involvement is anticipated between ACF and the grantees throughout the duration of the funded projects. ACF will monitor the project and provide technical assistance and feedback when necessary. ACF will provide leadership to maximize cooperation and collaboration among grantees, including organizing periodic consultations and teleconferences to review research activities, to share information, and to promote coordination of the project. ACF will schedule and host annual meetings for grantees, set the agenda, and coordinate activities. ACF will work collaboratively with grantees to facilitate accomplishment of project goals, including development of final technical approach and study design, identification of key data and research method, and the establishment of any advisory committees that will guide key decisions. ACF will facilitate collaboration and coordination with other grantees, the CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Center, if one should be created, ACF program offices (e.g., Office of Child Care) and their technical assistance providers, and other contractors.

See *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description* for information regarding grantees' roles and responsibilities under the cooperative agreement.

Please see *Section IV.5 Funding Restrictions* for limitations on the use of federal funds awarded under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

To promote the specific goals of this grant program, particularly building the capacity of CCDF Lead Agencies to develop a research plan to evaluate the implementation of policies and initiatives in response to the goals of the CCDBG Law of 2014, applicants eligible to receive awards are State, Territory, and Tribal CCDF Lead Agencies. "Lead Agency" means the state, territorial, or tribal entity designated in accordance with 45 CFR §§ 98.10 and 98.16(a) to which a CCDF grant is awarded and that is accountable for the use of the funds provided. CCDF Lead Agencies may partner with local government agencies or nongovernmental agencies that administer CCDF programs on their behalf (e.g., child care resource and referral agencies), as well as with institutions of higher education or research organizations, especially if the eligible agency does not have the in-house capacity to conduct research.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors.*

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where "cost sharing" refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

III.3. Other

Limit on the Number of Application Submissions

An applicant organization may submit **only one application** in response to this announcement. ACF will accept only the last, on-time application submitted for the competitive review.

Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

Applications that request an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period as stated in *Section II. Federal Award Information*, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for first 12-month budget period for projects with

multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at www.Grants.gov. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Applicants that do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the Internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "Request an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission" in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*.

Missing the Application Deadlines (Late Applications)

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Electronic applications submitted to www.Grants.gov after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from www.Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to www.Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period, and prior to the due date and time, which fail the www.Grants.gov validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by, ACF.

Each time an application is submitted via www.Grants.gov, the submission will generate a new date and time-stamp email notification. Only those applications with on-time date and time stamps that result in a validated application, which is transmitted to ACF, will be acknowledged.

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Paper applications received after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Notification of Application Disqualification

Applications that are disqualified under these criteria are considered to be “non-responsive” and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this FOA.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

OPRE Review Team: CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants

c/o ICF International

9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22031

Phone: (877) 350-5313

Fax: (703) 934-3740

Email: CCDBG@icfi.com

Electronic Application Submission:

The electronic application submission package is available in the FOA's listing at www.Grants.gov.

Applications in Paper Format:

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package available in the FOA's Grants.gov synopsis at www.Grants.gov. They are also available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to www.Grants.gov.

Standard Forms that are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d):

Available at the Grants.gov Forms Repository website at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>.

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) for assistance at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

In FY 2013 ACF implemented a new application upload requirement. Each applicant applying electronically via www.Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

AOR is the designated representative of the applicant/recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants. In signing a grant application, this individual agrees that the organization will assume the obligations imposed by applicable Federal statutes and regulations and other terms and conditions of the award, including any assurances, if a grant is awarded.

AOR authorization is part of the registration process at www.Grants.gov, where the AOR will create a short profile and obtain a username and password from the Grants.gov Credential Provider. AORs will only be authorized for the DUNS number registered in the System for Awards Management (SAM).

Point of Contact

In addition to the AOR, a point of contact on matters involving the application must also be identified. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR. The point of contact must be available to answer any questions pertaining to the application.

Application Checklist

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials.

Accepted Font Style

Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font.

Page Limitations

Applicants must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:". Page limitation(s) do not include SFs and OMB-approved forms.

All applications must be double-spaced. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have the last extra pages removed and the removed pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the table of contents, the one-page Project Summary/Abstract, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

Adherence to FOA Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the objective review. The removed page(s) will not be made available to reviewers.

In instances where formatting and font requirements are not adhered to, ACF uses a formula to determine the actual number of pages to be removed. The formula counts the number of characters an applicant uses when following the instructions and using 12-point TNR and compares the resulting number with that of the submitted application. For example, an applicant using TNR, 11-point font, with 1-inch margins all around, and single-spacing, would have an additional 26 lines, or 1500 characters, which is equal to 4/5 of an additional page. Extra pages resulting from this formula will be removed and will not be reviewed. Applications that have more than one scanned page of a document on a single page will have the page(s) removed from the review.

For applicants that submit paper applications, double-sided pages will be counted as two pages. When the maximum allowed number of pages is reached, excess pages will be removed and will not be made available to reviewers.

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Copies Required

Applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants submitting electronic applications need not provide additional copies of their application package.

Applicants submitting applications in paper format must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures.

Signatures

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at www.Grants.gov.

The original of a paper format application must include original signatures of the authorized representatives.

Accepted Application Format

With the exception of the required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, all application materials must be formatted so that they are 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around.

If possible, applicants are encouraged to include page numbers for each page within the

application.

ACF generally does not encourage submission of scanned documents as they tend to have reduced clarity and readability. If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Documents must be scanned page-for-page, meaning that applicants may not scan more than one page of a document onto a single page.

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

The **Project Description** file is limited to **60 pages** and includes:

- Table of Contents
- Project Summary/Abstract (one page maximum)
- Project Description Narrative
 - Outcomes Expected
 - Approach
 - Staff Qualifications
 - Organizational Capacity
 - Management Plan
 - Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds
 - Budget and Budget Justification

The **Appendices** file is limited to **40 pages** and includes:

- Biographical Sketches / Resumes / Job Descriptions
- Organizational Charts
- Documentation of Eligibility
- Copies of Third-Party Agreements (if applicable)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have requested and received an exemption that will allow submission in paper format. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for information about requesting an exemption.

Electronic applications will only be accepted via www.Grants.gov. **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

Each applicant is required to upload ONLY two electronic files, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms.

File One: Must contain the entire Project Description, and the Budget and Budget Justification (including a line-item budget and a budget narrative).

File Two: Must contain all documents required in the Appendices.

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement

No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will be amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

Application Upload Requirements

ACF strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs). One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification; the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices. Details on the content of each of the two files, as well as page limitations, are listed earlier in this section.

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Professional software suite will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Professional they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on “Support” at the top bar menu and select “Adobe Software Compatibility”, which is listed under the topic “Find Answers Online.” The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test application package. Grants.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions if an applicant is unable to open the test application package. There is also a help page for configuring Firefox and Chrome to open PDFs using Adobe software.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants that have received error messages while attempting to save an application package. It also addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or with SAM.gov, please refer to ACF’s “Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues” document for complete guidance at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf under “How to Apply for a Grant/Submit an Application.”

Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms

Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, such as the SF-424 application and budget forms and the SF-P/PSL (Project/Performance Site Location), are uploaded separately at Grants.gov. These forms are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files. See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and*

Certifications for the listing of required Standard Forms, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Special characters that are allowed under Grants.gov's naming conventions, and are accommodated by ACF's systems, are listed in the instructions available in the Download Application Package at Grants.gov. Please also see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

Use only file formats supported by ACF

It is critical that applicants submit applications using only the supported file formats listed here. While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two application submission files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDF documents in order to comply with the two file upload limitation.** Documents in file formats that are not supported by ACF will be removed from the application and will not be used in the competitive review. This may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make any awards based on an incomplete application.

ACF supports the following file formats:

- Adobe PDF – Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
- Corel WordPerfect (.wpd)
- Image Formats (.JPG, .GIF, .TIFF, or .BMP only)

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* later in this section under *Application Submission Options* for more information.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single FOA, or multiple applications under separate FOAs, each application submission must be

packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled for the specific FOA it addresses by FOA title and by Funding Opportunity Number (FON).

Because each application will be duplicated, do not use or include separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, maps, brochures, or any other items that cannot be processed easily on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten in any way separate sections of the application. Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. **All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes. All pages in the application submission must be sequentially numbered.**

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking grant or cooperative agreement awards under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this FOA at www.Grants.gov.

Other versions of required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Submission is required for all applicants and recipients, in writing, to the awarding agency and to the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) all information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal	Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR 75.113

	<p>award.</p> <p>Disclosures must be sent in writing to:</p> <p>The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Grants Management, ATTN: Grants Management Specialist, 330 C Street, SW., Switzer Building, Corridor 3200, Washington, DC 20201</p> <p><u>And</u></p> <p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201</p>	
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.

SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview and Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Form is available at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html . General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900).
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

	submitted prior to the award of a grant.	
DUNS Number (Unique Entity Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	<p>A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) is required of all applicants.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.</p> <p>Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.</p>	<p>A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants.</p> <p>See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information.</p>
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.

SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
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Non-Federal Reviewers

Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information. If applicants are submitting their application electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review and selection process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

Purpose

The project description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for available assistance. It should address the activity for which federal funds are being requested, and should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the program as described in *Section I. Program Description*. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. When appropriate, applicants should cite the evaluation criteria that are relevant to specific components of their project description. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.

General Expectations and Instructions

Applicants should develop project descriptions that focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Extensive exhibits are not required. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting information concerning activities that will not be directly funded by the grant or information that does not directly pertain to an integral part of the grant-funded activity should be placed in an appendix.

General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description

Introduction

Applicants must prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria in *Section V.I. Criteria*. The text options give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

Letter of Intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this announcement. Please submit the letter of intent by the deadline date listed in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

The letter of intent should include the following information: number and title of this announcement; the name and address of the applicant organization; and/or Fiscal Agent (if known); and the name, phone number, fax number and email address of a contact person.

Letter of intent information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications. **The letter of intent is optional.** Failure to submit a letter of intent **will not** impact eligibility to submit an application and **will not** disqualify an application from competitive review.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this announcement. Please submit the letter of intent by the deadline date listed in *Section IV.3 Submission Dates and Times*.

The letter of intent must include the following information: number and title of this announcement; the name and address of the applicant organization; and/or Fiscal Agent (if known); and the name, phone number, fax number and email address of a contact person.

Letter of intent information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications.

The letter of intent is optional. Failure to submit a letter of intent **will not** impact eligibility to submit an application and **will not** disqualify an application from competitive review.

Letters of intent should be submitted via e-mail to CCDBG@icfi.com or mailed to the following address:

OPRE Review Team

CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants

c/o ICF International

9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22031

Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers. The table of contents must be single spaced and will be counted against the total page limitations.

Project Summary/Abstract

Provide a summary of the application's project description. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without reference to other parts of the application. The abstract must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

Please place the following at the top of the abstract:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax)
- E-Mail Address
- Web Site Address, if applicable

The project abstract must be single-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, and limited to one page in length. Additional pages will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Objectives And Need For Assistance

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance including the nature and scope of the problem must be demonstrated, and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly and concisely stated; supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned interests other than the applicant, may be included. Any relevant data based on planning studies should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as well as data describing the needs of the target population and the proposed service area as needed. When appropriate, a literature review should be used to support the objectives and needs described in this section.

Approach

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and/or community involvement in the project. Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals that will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be used to address these challenges.

For CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants:

Applicants are to submit an application for the activities to be performed in the planning grant (Phase I). The strongest applications for the planning grants will be those that demonstrate an understanding of the two Phase process, present information on the activities to be completed during the planning grant (Phase I), and describe how the planning process will lead to the data and information needed to submit a competitive application (in 2017) for implementation

funding (Phase II). Applicants must address all of the core activities to be completed during Phase I (e.g. working with research partners, developing rigorous research plan), and explain how findings/results of those activities will lead to the development of a strong plan for Phase II (e.g., identification of key variables/data to answer their questions). Applicants must understand how the activities of the planning phase can be utilized to create the best possible set of circumstances to implement the project.

- Describe the specific policies or programs of interest and the plans for implementation, including data and/or information about why these policies were chosen. Note: During the grant period, grantees may modify or change the policies and strategies for implementation. If applicable, describe any plans for testing multiple strategies for best meeting a particular provision of the law given the needs of the state, territory, or tribe (e.g., testing both a supply-side initiative, such as contracts, and a subsidy policy/procedure change to increase access to stable, high quality child care to children and families in rural communities).
- Describe the current data system and plans for upgrading the system by Phase II (if applicable) for tracking family, child, and provider level variables. Include information on the platform that houses/will house the data (e.g., SQL database, Access database, excel files). Describe what data is/will be tracked in this system (e.g., data on licensing, subsidy system, QRIS, professional development systems) and how the data system connects/links with other systems (e.g., file transfer process) and what systems are/will be linked (if applicable). Describe any technical assistance/staffing supports that is/will be provided for the system (e.g., software developers, report writers, database administrators).
- Describe any (existing or planned) partnerships and plan for collaboration among all stakeholders, including key staff, researchers and other relevant stakeholders at the lead agency. If partnerships are not formalized at the time of application, the applicant must describe the plans for executing subcontract agreements, hiring staff or establishing memoranda of understanding.
- Describe how carrying out the proposed project would build the applicant's capacity to conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research.
- Describe plans for participating in the collaborative research consortium.
- Present a plan for flexibility in making improvements over the course of the planning period.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function, or activity, in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. For example, each project task could be assigned to a row in the first column of a grid. Then, a unit of time could be assigned to each subsequent column, beginning with the first unit (i.e., week, month, quarter) of the project and ending with the last. Shading, arrows, or other markings could be used across the applicable grid boxes or cells, representing units of time, to indicate the approximate duration and/or frequency of each task and its start and end dates within the

project period.

When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Additional Eligibility Documentation

Applicants must provide the additional, required documentation, or required credentials, to support eligibility for an award, as described in *Section III. Eligibility Information* of this announcement:

For CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants:

Applicants must provide documentation that they are a CCDF State, Territory, or Tribal Lead Agency, including a copy of Section 1.1 (Contact Information) of the approved CCDF Plan for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015-2016. If a change in Lead Agency is anticipated for FFY 2016-2017, provide written documentation signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the state, territory, or tribe.

Organizational Capacity

Provide the following information on the applicant organization and, if applicable, on any cooperating partners:

- Organizational charts;
- Resumes (no more than two single-spaced pages in length);
- Curricula Vitae (CV);
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description);
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

If any confidential or sensitive information will be collected during the course of the project, whether from staff (e.g., background investigations) or project participants and/or project beneficiaries, provide a description of the methods that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and safeguarded. Also provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period.

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds

Provide a plan describing how oversight of federal funds will be ensured and how grant activities and partner(s) will adhere to applicable federal and programmatic regulations. Applicants must identify staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities, staff, and partner(s). Applicants must describe procedures and policies used to oversee staff and/or partners/contractors.

Describe organizational records systems that relate financial data to performance data by identifying the source and application of federal funds so that they demonstrate effective control over and accountability for funds, compare outlays with budget amounts, and provide accounting records supported by source documentation.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C, according to the directions provided with the SFs. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate. See Indirect Charges for further information.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If matching or cost sharing is a requirement, applicants must include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance). See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

Special Note: *The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, (Division E, Title VII, General Provisions – Government-Wide), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary, or any percentage of salary, to an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$185,100. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

Provide a budget using the 424A and/or the 424C, as applicable, for the proposed project that is being fully funded (the budget period and the project period are the same). Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

For CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants:

- The budget should reflect the entire 18-month grant period; there is only one budget period for the length of the grant;
- The budget must reflect travel funds for key personnel to attend the Annual Meeting of the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium and the

State/Territory Administrators' Meeting, as well as an annual grantee meeting, all to be held in Washington, DC; and

- The award ceiling reflects total costs, including both direct and indirect costs.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the budget and budget justification. Both federal and non-federal resources (when required) shall be detailed and justified in the budget and budget narrative justification. "Federal resources" refers only to the ACF grant funds for which you are applying. "Non-federal resources" are all other non-ACF federal and non-federal resources. It is suggested that budget amounts and computations be presented in a columnar format: first column, object class categories; second column, federal budget; next column(s), non-federal budget(s); and last column, total budget. The budget justification should be in a narrative form.

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

Justification: Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application. For each staff person provide: the title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Do not include the costs of consultants, personnel costs of delegate agencies, or of specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Contractors and consultants should not be placed under this category.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, retirement insurance, and taxes.

Travel

Description: Costs of out-of-state or overnight project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. Do not include in-state travel or consultant travel.

Justification: For each trip show the total number of traveler(s); travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used to travel out of town; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key project staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops/conferences/grantee orientations should be detailed in the budget.

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year per unit and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the applicant organization's regular written accounting practices.)

Justification: For each type of equipment requested applicants must provide a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use of the equipment in the project; as well as a plan for the use, and/or disposal of, the equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy, or section of its policy, that includes the equipment definition.

Supplies

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property other than that included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

Contractual

Description: Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contracts with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. This area is not for individual consultants.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Recipients and subrecipients are required to use 45 CFR 75.328 procedures and must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed by 41 U.S.C. § 134, as amended by 2 CFR Part 200.88, and currently set at \$150,000. Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

Note: Whenever the applicant intends to delegate part of the project to another agency, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each contractor/sub-contractor, by agency title, along with the same supporting information referred to in these instructions. If the applicant plans to select the contractors/sub-contractors post-award and a detailed budget is not available at the time of

application, the applicant must provide information on the nature of the work to be delegated, the estimated costs, and the process for selecting the delegate agency.

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel; insurance; food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (noncontractual); professional services costs (including audit charges); space and equipment rentals; printing and publication; computer use; training costs, such as tuition and stipends; staff development costs; and administrative costs.

Justification: Provide computations, a narrative description, and a justification for each cost under this category.

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

1) The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant federal agency.

Note: An applicant must enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

2) Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, “any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect costs rate, ... may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in § 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.”

Justification: This method only applies to applicants that have never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may request the 10 percent de minimis. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424.

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient’s cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where "cost sharing" refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

Justification: If an applicant is relying on match from a third party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter(s) or other documentation) is required to be submitted with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding (\$)" on the SF-424.

Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching requirement. Applicants are also required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards). **A recipient's failure to provide a statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

Applications that lack the required supporting documentation will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1.* of this announcement.

Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, expiration date is 01/31/2019. An agency may not conduct or

sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via www.Grants.gov

Additional guidance on the submission of electronic applications can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

After a grant application package is submitted to www.Grants.gov, a confirmation screen will appear on the applicant's computer screen. This screen confirms that an application has been submitted an application to Grants.gov. This page also contains a tracking number to identify the status of the application submission in the Track My Application feature.

When the application has completed the Grants.gov submission process, Grants.gov will send email messages to advise the applicant of the progress of the application through its system. **Over the next two business days, an applicant should receive two emails from Grants.gov:**

- **Submission Receipt Email:** Confirms successful receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system and indicates the application's status as "Received."
- **Submission Validation –OR– Rejection with Errors Email:** Indicates that the application was either successfully validated or rejected by Grants.gov. Either the application has been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or the application has been rejected due to errors.

Application Validation at www.Grants.gov

After an application has been successfully submitted to www.Grants.gov, it still must pass a series of validation checks. After an application is submitted, Grants.gov generates a submission receipt via email and also sets the application status to "Received." This receipt verifies that the application has been successfully delivered to the Grants.gov system.

Next, Grants.gov verifies the submission is valid by ensuring it does not contain viruses, the opportunity is still open, and the applicant login and applicant DUNS number match. If the submission is valid, Grants.gov generates a submission validation receipt via email and sets the application status to "Validated."

If the application is not validated, the application status is set to "Rejected." The system sends a rejection email notification to the applicant and the applicant must re-submit the application package. See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

Each time an application is re-submitted to www.Grants.gov, the applicant will receive a new **Submission Receipt Email**. Only applications with on-time date and time stamps in Submission Receipt Email, and that pass validation, will be transmitted to ACF.

Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check are not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged.

NOTE: The Grants.gov validation check can affect whether the application is accepted for review. If an application fails the Grants.gov validation check and is not resubmitted by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

Similarly, if an applicant resubmits their application to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, and the resubmitted application does not pass the validation check, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

Grants.gov Support Center

- If applicants encounter any technical difficulties in using www.Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Support Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at support@grants.gov, to report the problem and obtain assistance. Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Grants.gov Support Center is closed on federal holidays.
- Applicants should always retain Grants.gov Support Center service ticket number(s) as they may be needed for future reference.
- **Contact with the Grants.gov Support Center prior to the listed application due date and time does not ensure acceptance of an application. If difficulties are encountered, the Grants Management Officer listed in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)* will determine whether the submission issues are due to Grants.gov system errors or user error.**

Issues with Federal Systems

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF recognizes that some applicants may have limited or no Internet access, and/or limited computer capacity, which may prohibit them from uploading large files at www.Grants.gov. To accommodate such applicants, ACF offers an exemption from required electronic submission. The exemption will allow applicants to submit hard copy, paper applications by hand-delivery, applicant courier, overnight/express mail couriers, or by other representatives of the applicant.

To receive an exemption from required electronic application submission, applicants must submit a written request to ACF that must state that the applicant qualifies for the exemption for one of the two following reasons:

- Lack of Internet access or Internet connection, or

- Limited computer capacity that prevents the uploading of large documents (files) at www.Grants.gov.

Applicants may request and receive the exemption from required electronic application submission by either:

- Submitting an email request to electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov, or
- Sending a written request to the Office of Grants Management Contact listed in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)* in this announcement.

Requests for exemption from required electronic application submission will be acknowledged with an approval or disapproval.

Requests that do not state one of the two listed reasons will not be approved.

An exemption is applicable to all applications submitted by the applicant organization during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) in which it is received. Applicants need only request an exemption once in a FFY. Applicants must request a new exemption from required electronic submission for any succeeding FFY.

Please Note: electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov may only be used to request an exemption from required electronic submission. All other inquiries must be directed to the appropriate agency contact listed in *Section VII.* of this announcement. Queries or requests submitted to this email address for any reason other than a request for an exemption from electronic application submission will not be acknowledged or answered.

All exemption requests must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Announcement Title,
- Funding Opportunity Number (FON),
- The listed Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number,
- Name of Applicant Organization and DUNS Number,
- AOR name and contact information,
- Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving the application (i.e., the Point of Contact), and
- The reason for which the applicant is requesting an exemption from electronic application submission. The request for exemption must state one of the following two reasons: 1) lack of Internet access or Internet connection; or 2) lack of computer capacity that prevents uploading large documents (files) to the Internet.

Exemption requests must be received by ACF no later than two weeks before the application due date, that is, 14 calendar days prior to the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. If the fourteenth calendar day falls on a weekend or federal holiday, the due date for receipt of an exemption request will move to the next federal business day that follows the weekend or federal holiday.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is required for the submission of paper applications. See the preceding section on "*Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*"

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.7.* of this announcement for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* in this announcement.

IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants must have a DUNS Number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov/SAM, <https://www.sam.gov>).

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, registration at SAM must be active throughout the life of the award.

Plan ahead. Allow at least 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and at least an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e. Grants.gov.

This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the "Help" tab at

<https://www.sam.gov>.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency, or receive subawards directly from recipients of those grant funds to:

- Be registered in the SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by an OPDIV; and
- Provide its active DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV.

ACF is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, ACF:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Letter of Intent

Due Date for Letter of Intent: **05/23/2016**

Due Dates for Applications

Due Date for Applications: **07/08/2016**

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* section and in this section. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via www.Grants.gov is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via www.Grants.gov unless they received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

ACF does not accommodate transmission of applications by email or facsimile.

Instructions for electronic submission via www.Grants.gov are available at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period prior to the due date and time that fail the Grants.gov validation check will not be received at ACF. These applications will not be acknowledged.

Mailed Paper Format Applications

The deadline for receipt of mailed, paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date. Mailed paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, by overnight/express mail couriers, or other representatives of the applicant must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

Hand-delivered paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Hand-delivered paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

No appeals will be considered for applications classified as late under the following circumstances:

- Applications submitted electronically via www.Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper format applications received from applicant organizations that were not approved for an exemption from required electronic application submission under the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission* will be disqualified.

Emergency Extensions

ACF may extend an application due date when circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit their applications on time. Only events such as documented natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or a verifiable widespread disruption of

electrical service, or mail service, will be considered. The determination to extend or waive the due date, and/or receipt time, requirements in an emergency situation rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)*.

Acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to www.Grants.gov. This email will provide a **Grants.gov Tracking Number**. Applicants should refer to this tracking number in all communication with Grants.gov. The email will also provide a **date and time stamp**, which serves as the official record of application's submission. Receipt of this email does not indicate that the application is accepted or that it has passed the validation check.

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**, after which a third email is sent with the information that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, the series of checks and validations. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged by ACF.

See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

Applicants will be sent additional email(s) from ACF acknowledging that the application has been retrieved from www.Grants.gov by ACF. Receipt of these emails is not an indication that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:

ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

This program is covered under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," and 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." Under the Executive Order, States may design their own processes for reviewing and commenting on proposed Federal assistance under covered programs.

Applicants should go to the following URL for the official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in E.O. 12372

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/.

Applicants from participating jurisdictions should contact their SPOC, as soon as possible, to alert them of their prospective applications and to receive instructions on their jurisdiction's procedures. Applicants must submit all required application materials to the SPOC and indicate the date of submission on the Standard Form (SF) 424 at item 19.

Under 45 CFR 100.8(a)(2), a SPOC has 60 days from the application due date to comment on proposed new awards.

SPOC comments may be submitted directly to ACF to: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, Division of Discretionary Grants, 330 C St. SW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

Entities that meet the eligibility requirements of this announcement are still eligible to apply for a grant even if a State, Territory or Commonwealth, etc., does not have a SPOC or has chosen not to participate in the process. Applicants from non-participating jurisdictions need take no action with regard to E.O. 12372. Applications from Federally-recognized Indian Tribal governments are not subject to E.O. 12372.

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR §75.442)

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications on potential Federal and non-Federal awards or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the non-Federal entity's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as indirect (F&A) costs and allocated currently to all activities of the non-Federal entity. No proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. (45 CFR §75.460)

Grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant award.

Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant award.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Submission By Mail

OPRE Review Team: CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants
c/o ICF International

9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

Hand Delivery

OPRE Review Team: CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning
Grants
c/o ICF International
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via <http://www.Grants.gov>.
For all submissions, see *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: Reviewers will not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Though an application may include web links, or embedded hyperlinks, reviewers will not review this information as it is not considered to be part of the application documents. Nor will the information on websites be taken into consideration in scoring of evaluation criteria presented in this section. Reviewers will evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and **will not** refer to, or access, external links during the objective review.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. The corresponding point values indicate the relative importance placed on each review criterion. Points will be allocated based on the extent to which the application proposal addresses each of the criteria listed. Applicants should address these criteria in their application materials, particularly in the project description and budget justification, as they are the basis upon which competing applications will be judged during the objective review. The required elements of the project description and budget justification may be found in *Section IV.2* of this announcement.

Outcomes Expected

Maximum Points:20

Goals and Objectives (10 points)

- The applicant articulates the goals of the proposed projects, including summarizing the expected outcome(s), including the impact the planning grant would have on policy decisions.
- The applicant reflects a solid understanding of critical issues, information needs, and research goals of ACF and the CCDF program.
- The applicant describes how the proposed project would help the agency build an

effective research partnership and/or increase capacity within the agency to conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research.

Significance (10 points)

- The applicant sufficiently discusses the benefits of conducting an evaluation of the policies or programs.
 - The applicant sufficiently explains how the results of the proposed project would be relevant to children, parents, and/or providers.
 - The applicant describe how the proposed policy changes will be funded (outside of the grant) and discusses the impact of implementing the changes on both the budget and children and families served.

Approach	Maximum Points:40
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The applicant clearly demonstrates that they understand the purpose of Phase I (planning), including demonstrating an understanding of the benefits of an evaluation. The applicant's activities provide a solid process to prepare the applicant to submit a solid applicant for Phase II (implementation funding).• The applicant describes the specific policies and programs of interest and plans for implementation, including information on funding the implementation of the policies outside of funding from the grant, providing preliminary data and information regarding the policies and/or initiatives, and providing rationale for choosing these implementation strategies.• The applicant describes their current data system and plans for upgrading this system by Phase II, including the ability to track child, family, and provider level variables, including the platform that houses/will house the data (e.g., SQL database, Access database, excel files) outside of funding from the grant. The applicants adequately describes what data is/will be tracked in this system (e.g., data on licensing, subsidy system, QRIS, professional development systems), as well as how the data system connects/links with other systems (e.g., file transfer process) and what systems are/will be linked, if applicable. The applicant describes any technical assistance/staffing supports that is/will be provided for the system (e.g., software developers, report writers, database administrators).• The applicant clearly demonstrates that carrying out the proposed project would build the applicant's capacity to conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research.• The applicant describes their plan for collaboration between researchers and other stakeholders at the lead agency, including a plan for joint decision-making, development of research questions and methodology, and implementation strategies.• The extent to which the proposal demonstrates the plans for participating in the collaborative research consortium as described in the announcement, including such things as the budget reflecting travel to required meetings.• The applicant articulates the willingness to be flexible in making improvements over the course of the planning period and articulates their understanding of the planning and implementation phases of the projects.	

Staff Qualifications	Maximum Points:10
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- The applicant demonstrates that key staff has the necessary technical skill, qualifications, and experience, as well as the knowledge of CCDF policies and related initiatives, to successfully carry out their assigned roles.
- The applicant provides the proportion of time staff holding key positions will be committed to the project, the period of time they will be employed, and whether their continued employment will be dependent solely on the funds to be awarded under this announcement.
- The applicant describes the research partners, either within or outside of the lead agency, including qualifications, relevant experience and role on the project. If partners have not been identified yet, describe what qualifications are necessary for this project.
- The applicant provides position description(s) outlining the qualifications necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of vacant positions. The applicant includes letters of commitment from any individuals who have been selected but not yet hired.
- The applicant identifies the authors of the proposal and describes their continuing role in the project if funded.

Organizational Capacity	Maximum Points:10
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- The applicant demonstrates that key staff has the necessary technical skill, qualifications, and experience, as well as the knowledge of CCDF policies and related initiatives, to successfully carry out their assigned roles.
- The applicant provides the proportion of time staff holding key positions will be committed to the project, the period of time they will be employed, and whether their continued employment will be dependent solely on the funds to be awarded under this announcement.
- The applicant describes the research partners, either within or outside of the lead agency, including qualifications, relevant experience and role on the project. If partners have not been identified yet, describe what qualifications are necessary for this project.
- The applicant provides position description outlining the qualifications necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of vacant positions. The applicant includes letters of commitment from any individuals who have been selected but not yet hired.
- The applicant identifies the authors of the proposal and describes their continuing role in the project if funded.

Management Plan	Maximum Points:10
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- The applicant presents a clear timeline of major activities, milestones, products, and estimated completion dates for the proposed projects.
- The applicant presents a sound, workable, and cohesive management plan demonstrating how the work will be carried out on time, maintaining quality, and within budget.
- The applicant provides a sound plan for coordination of activities carried out by all partners on project team, demonstrating an effective approach to team building among project staff, consultants and advisors, and partnering organizations.
- The proposal demonstrates how the project will be managed by the grantee/lead organization to ensure that members of the partnership operate as a cohesive team and that crosscutting goals of the project are accomplished efficiently.
- The applicant includes clear and practical plans for communication and consultation among team members and key stakeholders.
- The applicant includes adequate discussion of potential problems or challenges to accomplishing the project's objectives, including factors that may affect the quality of the research or its outcomes, may undermine the ability of partners to

Budget and Budget Justification

Maximum Points:10

- Does the budget clearly detail the itemized expenses for the project, and does the narrative budget justification clearly explain all calculations and how each itemized expense will be utilized?
- Are proposed project costs commensurate with the types and range of activities to be conducted and the expected goals and objectives of the project?
- Are all personnel funds reasonable for the responsibilities and time dedicated to the project activities?
- Does the budget include funds for all required items, including travel for two attendees to attend two meetings in Washington, DC, during the period of performance of the grant?
- Is the budget for the entire 18-month project period?

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this announcement on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant or sub-recipient that does not have a DUNS number (www.dbn.com) and an active registration at SAM (www.sam.gov). See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)*.

Initial ACF Screening

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets any of the disqualification factors described in *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Disqualified applications are considered to be “non-responsive” and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this FOA.

Objective Review and Results

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this announcement. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested. ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. ACF will also consider the geographic distribution of federal funds in its award decisions.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

As required by 2 CFR 200 of the Uniform Guidance, effective January 1, 2016, ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), <https://www.fapiis.gov/>, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000) over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR § 200.205 Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1205&rgn=div8).

Please refer to *Section IV.2.* of this announcement for information on non-federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval that were not funded under the competition because of the lack of available funds may be held over by ACF and reconsidered in a subsequent review cycle if a future competition under the program area is planned. These applications will be held over for a period of up to one year and will be re-competed for funding with all other competing applications in the next available review cycle. For those applications determined as approved but unfunded, notice will be given of the determination by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date. ACF staff cannot respond to requests for information regarding funding decisions prior to the official applicant notification.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Notice of Award (NoA) that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via postal mail, email, or by GrantSolutions.gov or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk and may be reimbursed only to the extent that they are considered allowable as approved pre-award costs. Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions*.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements>.

Human Subjects Research

If the proposed project involves research activities involving human subjects, the applicant must comply with the HHS regulations at 45 CFR Part 46 regarding the protection of human research subjects, unless the activities are exempt as specified in the regulation.

Before engaging in ACF-supported human subjects research, an institution must:

1. Hold or obtain a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) approved by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP); and
2. Certify to ACF that the research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) designated in the FWA and will be subject to continuing review by an IRB.

As referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*, applicants proposing to conduct research activities with human subjects must submit the form *Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of*

Exemption (Common Rule) *with the application* package; if the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.

For more information, see <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/index.html>.

VI.3. Reporting

Recipients under this FOA will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2>.

For planning purposes, the frequency of required reporting for awards made under this announcement are as follows:

Performance Progress Reports:	Quarterly
Financial Reports:	Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Meryl Barofsky
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Division of Child and Family Development
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20201
Phone: (202) 401-5541
Fax: (202) 205-3598
Email: Meryl.Barofsky@acf.hhs.gov

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea Westfall
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20201
Phone: (202) 401-5542
Fax: (703) 934-3740
Email: bridget.sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

VIII. Other Information**Reference Websites**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) <http://www.hhs.gov/>.

HHS Grants Forecast <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/hhsgrantsforecast/index.cfm>.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/>.

ACF Grants Homepage <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants>.

ACF Funding Opportunities <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/>.

ACF "How to Apply for a Grant" <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-to-apply-for-grants>.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) <https://www.cfda.gov/>.

For submission of a paper format application, all required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Grants-Forms page through <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms>.

Standard grant forms are available at the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Forms Repository webpage at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>.

For information regarding accessibility issues, visit the Grants.gov Accessibility Compliance Page at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html>

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.

The *Federal Register* <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.

United States Code (U.S.C.) <http://uscode.house.gov/>.

CCDF Reauthorization: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/ccdf-reauthorization>

Application Checklist

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
<p>Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov page under the "Application Package" tab in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.</p>
<p>The Project Budget and Budget Justification</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> of the announcement.</p>	<p>Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A or SF-424C. It must be submitted with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
<p>Project Timeline and Milestones</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></p>	<p>Submission due by the application due date found in <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4.</i></p>

The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission due by the application due date found in <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4</i> .
Commitment of Non-Federal Resources	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Organizational Capacity	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission due by the application due date found in <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4</i> .
Letter of Intent	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4</i> .

Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" entry in the table in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications</i> .	Concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.
Table of Contents	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submit with the application by the due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Job Descriptions	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission due by the application due date found in <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4</i> .
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .

<p>SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities</p>	<p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is available in the electronic application kit at Grants.gov</p> <p>and at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>If applicable, submission of this form is required if any funds have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing, or attempting to influence, an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.</p>	<p>If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application.</p> <p>If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
<p>Resumes</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></p>	<p>Submission due by the application due date found in <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4.</i></p>

SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</p> <p>by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
Outcomes Expected	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i>	Submission due by the application due date found in <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4.</i>
DUNS Number (Unique Entity Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the announcement.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier), go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.</p> <p>To register at SAM, go to http://www.sam.gov.</p>	<p>A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.</p> <p>Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p>

<p>Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. Additional information and necessary forms are available at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html.</p> <p>For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
<p>SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>These forms are required for</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>

	<p>applications under this FOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that include only non-construction activities must submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL. 	
SF-424 Key Contact Form	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is also available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</p> <p>by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the</p> <p><i>Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>